

Abstract 440

TITLE: Reaching Asian and Pacific Islanders for HIV Counseling and Testing Services

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ISSUE: How to increase Asians' and Pacific Islanders' (APIs) access to HIV counseling and testing services through culturally appropriate and linguistically competent approaches. The review will discuss barriers for APIs to access services, non-traditional "risk" categories, and effective approaches to increase API access.

SETTING: By outreaching through various venues such as API ethnic festivals, gay API parties, API community-based organizations and clinics, Asian Pacific Health Care Venture, Inc. (APHCV) has increased APIs' access to HIV counseling and testing services in Los Angeles County.

PROJECT: To address the issue of API access of HIV counseling and testing services, APHCV developed a program that addresses APIs in a culturally competent and linguistically appropriate manner for access of services.

RESULTS: While prevention planning categorizes only certain people and behaviors as "high risk," this approach often excludes certain API subgroups which are at "high risk" for HIV. The low number of APIs receiving counseling and testing services does not indicate lower need, but in fact, reveals the lack of adequate and culturally competent HIV counseling and testing services in Los Angeles County. Our efforts clearly demonstrate that APIs do not seek services unless the program is culturally competent and linguistically appropriate. Using the California State risk assessment form often overlooks many APIs who maybe at risk, such as recent immigrant monogamous females, and in effect puts them in a low-risk category. Reaching APIs requires "out of the box" thinking and approaches to effectively combat HIV among this population group.

LESSONS LEARNED: Many API monolingual clients will only access services where they can communicate with the providers in their own languages. In order to better target specific API populations, aggregating HIV counseling and testing data can provide information on different API populations accessing and not accessing services. Primary health care services is sometimes the first venue where recent immigrants have exposure to and access to HIV counseling and testing services and many hard-to-reach groups access services at outreach sites like community festivals that are ethnic-specific, especially for recent immigrants. API clients acquire information about HIV counseling and testing services through outreach events and sites. Finally, programs need to address APIs in a transnationalist model context to effectively reach the diverse API population.

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